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The Father of the C

Drive out to CIA headquarters at Langley. Walk across the huge official seal set in the marble floor of the lobby. Turn right in the big main corridor and you will see it—a large oil painting of Gen. William Joseph Donovan, hanging with the other portraits in a sort of Intelligence Hall of Fame. Certainly it deserves to be there, for "Wild Bill" Donovan was, for better or worse, the father of the Central Intelligence Agency.

As director of the wartime Office of Strategic Services, Donovan (Number 109) circled the globe carrying his K-capsule "of deadly poison to be swallowed if he fell into enemy hands." He rode ashore with fellow OSS operative David Bruce at Normandy, he was with the first wave at Anzio, he flew 150 miles into Japanese-occupied territory in Burma to visit an OSS detachment. He was all over the place, directing a kaleidoscopic assortment of scholars and killers, analysts and spies, socialites and saboteurs, scientists and oddballs—an organization that by the end of World War II had 30,000 people and a budget of $37 million a year which, like CIA's funds today, could be secretly spent outside normal accounting procedures.

Corey Ford, who died last year a few days after he had finished this book, wisely states at the outset that it does not "pretend to be a complete history of the Office of Strategic Services." It is not; but Ford, who knew Donovan and served under him in the OSS, does add a wealth of detail and a fuller portrait of Donovan the man than the one that hangs in the main corridor at Langley. In doing so, the author had access to the personal diaries and files of Gen. Donovan through his widow, Ruth Donovan, assistance from many of the OSS director's wartime associates, and from "Walter Pforzheimer of Washington D.C.," who is not identified as a top-echelon CIA official.

DONOVAN OF OSS

Corey Ford

(Little, Brown; 366 pp.; illustrated; $8.50)

Reviewed by David Wise

The reviewer is coauthor of The Invisible Government *and* The Espionage Establishment.

Although *Donovan of O.S.S.* is wholly uncritical of both the man and the organization he led, it is never dull, for Donovan's life was anything but dull. He was an elusive but gallant and tough-minded man who succeeded in crowding several ordinary lifetimes into one.

He had an unlikely background for someone who was to lead an organization honeycombed (like its successor, CIA) with Establishment WASPs and Groton graduates. Donovan was the son of Irish immigrants from County Cork, born in Buffalo on the wrong side of the tracks—tracks which his father literally supervised as head of the railroad yards.

The first half of Donovan's career evokes every cinematic cliche of World War I: the Columbia Law School graduate and guard officer who goes over the top with New York's Fighting 69th, Father Duffy at his side; the Boche, no match for the Fighting Irish who survive mustard gas to win glory at St.-Mihiel and the Argonne; Donovan, shot in the leg, dismisses it as "a clean wound through" in a note to his wife, but wins the Congressional Medal of Honor. Oh! What a Lovely War!—for those who returned.

Donovan's second career was pure James Bond; FDR dispatched him to England where he got a look at M.I.6, British secret intelligence and SOE, its counterpart for special operations. On his return in 1941, he recommended to Roosevelt that the United States establish its own central intelligence agency for both intelligence analysis and cloak-and-dagger spying. Out of this recommendation grew OSS.

Setting up shop at 25th and E Streets, across from what is now the New State Department building, Donovan recruited a diverse group: William L. Langer of Harvard, Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., Robert E. Sherwood, David Bruce, John Gardner, Arthur Goldberg, John Ford, Sterling Hayden, James B. Donovan, John Ringling North—even Ralph Bunche, Dillon Ripley, Ho Chi Minh and John Birch toiled for OSS.

Some, like Allen Dulles, Richard Helms, Sherman Kent and Larry Houston, stayed on and moved into CIA after its creation in 1947. But others, like Walt Rostow, Carl Kaysen, and many more fanned out into the academic world and the corporations and foundations; many were there (may we say as agents-in-place?) when the CIA needed them to set up its fronts in the great universities, its centers and institutes for this and that, its foundation conduits. The OSS Old Boy network still is very much with us; for OSS and E Street is Where It All Began. No less an authority than McGeorge Bundy assures us as "a curious fact of academic history that the first great center of area studies in the United States was not located in any university, but in Washington, during the Second World War, in the Office of Strategic Services. In very large measure the area study programs developed in American universities in the years after the war were manned, directed, or stimulated by graduates of the OSS—a remarkable institution, half cops-and-robbers and half faculty meeting. It is still true today . . ."

Bill Donovan remains in the end an enigmatic figure, of "essential loneliness" and "a vast inner restlessness." He was dedicated, brave. And yet . . . his successors in Virginia are also dedicated men. But not elected by the people. If only Roosevelt had not announced his policy of unconditional surrender, Dulles and SS General Karl Wolff could have cleaned things up in Italy and perhaps the Russians wouldn't be so powerful today. Presidents keep interfering and getting in the way of the operators. Intelligence knows best. They are all dedicated, honorable men—even the ones who led Eisenhower into the U-2 disaster and Kennedy into the Bay of Pigs—but with an elitist dedication and a mistrust of the governed, who, after all, wouldn't understand. So why ask their consent? Is there a lesson here somewhere for today, in, say, Laos?